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15. (Amended) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier comprises a ring-shaped wall.

16. (Amended) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier comprises a plurality of circumferentially spaced fins.

17. (Amended) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 16, wherein said compactor wheel has an inner row of said cleats mounted adjacent to said inner circumferential edge, one of said fins is mounted to said rim between each pair of adjacent cleats forming said row.

§2 18. (Amended) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 17, wherein said at least one circumferential barrier includes buttressing structure for support.

19. (Amended) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 18, wherein said buttressing structure is a broadening of said at least one circumferential barrier at said face of said rim.

20. (Amended) The compaction machine as set forth in claim 14, wherein said axle guard system further comprises a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge a distance, said at least one circumferential barrier being mounted on said cleat-free area.

§3 23. (Amended) A compaction machine comprising:
a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;
an axle having two ends and mounting said body; and
a compactor wheel mounted on each end of said axle, one compactor wheel on each side of said body, said compactor wheel comprising:
a hub mountable to said axle;
a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face

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and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge;

· a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge, with said cleat-free area being wide enough that refuse is less likely to be directed toward said axle of said compaction machine.

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(Amended)

A compaction machine comprising:

a body suitable for compacting refuse, said body having opposite sides;

an axle having two ends and mounting said body; and

a compactor wheel mounted on at least one end of said axle, said compactor wheel

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comprising:

a hub mountable to said axle;

a rim mounted around the outer circumference of said hub, said rim having a face and an inner circumferential edge and an outer circumferential edge;

a plurality of compaction cleats circumferentially spaced on, transversely spaced across and mounted to said face of said rim; and

an axle guard system comprising a cleat-free area formed circumferentially around said rim on said face and extending widthwise from said inner edge across said rim toward said outer edge, with said cleat-free area being wide enough that cable, rope or wire refuse is less likely to be directed toward said axle and end up wrapped around said axle of said compaction machine.

A version of the above amended claims is attached, with markings to show changes made in the claims relative to the previous version of the claims.